

Testimony

Capitol Region Development Authority

Before the Planning and Development Committee

General Assembly, State of Connecticut

Proposed HB 5980

An Act Extending the Boundaries of the Capital Region Development
Authority

Honorable Members of the Planning and Development Committee, my name is Mike Freimuth and I am the Executive Director of the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA). CRDA is the successor agency to the former Capital City Economic Development Authority which was established to build out the Adriaen's Landing District including the Convention Center and Front Street. That task, largely completed in 2012 led to the reconstituting of the Agency, its board and its mission into CRDA.

Besides managing the major state entertainment venues including the XL Center, Rentschler Field and the Convention Center/Front Street area; CRDA has also been engaged with a variety of projects geared to renew the downtown Hartford business district including the reconstruction of a variety of state office complexes and the creation of new housing units.

Our primary district covers the downtown Hartford area, stretching roughly from just north of Interstate 84, down to the Colt facility along Interstate 91, generally westward to the State Capitol building, and returning to the east along Farmington and Asylum Avenues to the Connecticut River. We can also participate in projects elsewhere within the City of Hartford at its request and in the seven towns that abut Hartford at the request of those communities. However, we cannot utilize funds for 'capital city economic development projects' outside of the main downtown target area. For this reason, the expansion of the target area would free up some of our authorized funding to be used within the proposed new lines incorporating parts of East Hartford.

As we have worked over the last two years, we have noticed the need and opportunity to also engage in development around our assets in East Hartford and began to explore the concept with the Town. At the CRDA January 2015 Board meeting, CRDA considered the possibilities to expand its targeted district for its work, including rail and transit corridors within the eight CRDA regional towns; opportunities in neighborhoods adjoining the downtown Hartford central business district and areas along the Connecticut River to compliment activity there. HB5980 proposes to extent the CRDA capital city economic development project area to include an area of East Hartford along the river extending to the area of Rentschler Field/UTC Pratt & Whitney facilities for CRDA to participate. We are supportive of this amendment (with some technical adjustments to the boundaries as outlined below) and look forward to working with the Town of East Hartford to advance a variety of projects that they've deemed important and critical to the Town's long term economic health and to be able to utilize our technical and staff support to bring them into fruition. Potential projects include work in the Founder's Plaza area, opportunities in and around Goodwin College, in-fill investments on Main Street and work at the Rentschler Field/UTC campus.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have and look forward to this legislation advancing. Thank You.

Suggested Technical Amendment to boundaries.

**AN ACT EXTENDING THR BOUNDARIES OF THE CAPITAL REGION
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

That chapter 588x of the general statues be amended to extend the boundaries of the Capital Region Development Authority into (1) the area bounded by ~~Pitkin Street to the north, Jayce Street to the east and East River Drive to the west and south~~ Cedar Street and Burnside Avenue to the north, Forbes Street to the east, East River Drive to the west and Brewer Street to the south, and (2) the area known as Rentschler Field.